so full of love by borealisboys

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dustin has questions, billy's happy to help.

so full of love

Author's Note:

> my first harringrove fic, written rushed at eleven at night so i apologise. lapslock warning (i type more fluently with all lowercase)

billy hated children.

everything about them set his nerves alight; they were always too overconfident, too sporadic, too blunt. they were too much of everything billy hated. he tolerated maxine, but purely because she, at least, understood billy more than anyone else did.

so the fact he was carpooling one of her friends to town truly astounded him but steve had begged, coughed into the phone, claimed he was sick and maybe it wouldn't be as bad if max was there but she had already arrived in town on the back of lucas' bike. screw her.

the kid approached the camaro a little hesitantly, tugging on his backpack straps and bending down to tie his shoelaces and god was billy going to jump out of the car and throttle him if he didn't hurry up. eventually, however, he reached the car, opened and closed the door with care but the camaro passenger door was already scratched up enough from max's tantrums. the kid didn't say anything, looked down at his lap and played with a loose string on the bottom of his sweater. billy rolled his eyes and turned up the music a little bit to at least fill the silence. he pulled off, driving slower than usual because he didn't want steve nagging him about his driving once again.

"i'm dustin," he spoke up after what felt like a century of silence. billy tilted his head, met the kid's gaze for a moment before looking back at the road and the weather-beaten trees in every direction.

"i know, i've heard a lot about you," he watched dustin's face light up from the corner of his eye and smirked, amused.

"really?" he sat up in his seat enthusiastically.

"yup," billy popped the 'p' and took a corner a little too sharp, "you're his favourite," he had an idea that steve wasn't sick at all and that this was really just a ploy for him to befriend his best friend so if that was the case then billy would do so, even if it ached him to. dustin nodded, satisfied, a little smile playing on his lips.

"yeah, well, he kinda protected us and stuff, y'know, so i really like him. he's helped me out with all my projects, he's given me advice, he-"

"steve's given you advice?" billy's hand reached for his cigarette box but slowly pulled back from it, worried that the kid would tell steve, who never stops establishing the fact that smoking is bad for him and he's gonna be in debt with how much gum he buys for him.

"yeah," dustin confirmed, watching the woods to his right.

"what about?" he asked, a little amused.

"i don't know, girls and stuff," he shrugged, face reddening and then billy laughed a little because steve was definitely not that good at giving advice about girls, especially not compared to him.

"did it work?" he prodded, noticing the first house in a while on his left. it was prettily built but reminded him too much of how shit this damn town was compared to california. sure, it sounded exciting on those two weeks he had been informed of but when there weren't monsters to kill there was nothing to do, ever. there were no beaches which disappointed billy the most because he spent most of his time there.

"uh-well, not really, not at the snowball," billy recalled that dance from when he dropped off max and he frowned.

"no?"

"no. they kinda just- just walked away from me, laughed at me a bit, i just got too confident, i think," billy met his gaze again, "i told steve and he took me out for ice cream," he smiled a bit at the memory and billy reciprocated the action involuntarily. steve had told him of countless times that he had protected the kids like a father but

sometimes, rarely, steve wanted protecting too. those were billy's favourite days.

"you ever been to a dance?" dustin questioned and billy raised an eyebrow.

"sorry?"

"like the snowball or something, y'know back in california? did you go to a dance?" he tilted his head, curiously, curls coiling along with his movement.

"not really, even when we did, i didn't go to them," he admitted and dustin frowned.

"why not?" for once one of the kids sounded genuinely interested in something billy had to say. it made him feel warm.

"i don't know i just- i just never felt like dressing up to dance with some girls, wasn't my thing," he sounded nonchalant but recalled that that wasn't the reason at all, it was really his father but he'd rather not go into that conversation with dustin.

"shame, bet they would've been all over you," billy laughed genuinely, "but you've got steve now."

it was billy's turn to go red this time and he tilted his head away, pretended to be focused on driving.

"that i do, kid," he pulled into a more busy street but the town was still a fair distance away and billy couldn't tell if that was a bad thing or a good thing.

"is steve all over you?" dustin asked and they laughed collectively, much to billy's enjoyment.

"i think so, he's a clingy one," dustin nodded, smiling, clearly entertained.

"i never thought of steve as a clingy type," he admitted and billy could understand that.

"oh he is, he's like glue, once he's on you, you can't get him off," dustin giggled at that comment, "acts like i'd disappear if he let go of me."

"maybe he's worried you will," dustin spoke up and billy frowned.

"what?"

"disappear, i mean, maybe he's worried you'll disappear, you're always talking about moving back to california when you get the chance, maybe that's why he's so clingy," dustin shrugged as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. billy was astounded - he never realised what effect his rambles could have on someone and he was astounded that this realisation occurred because of a child.

"i wouldn't leave him here, not by himself, he's already had enough heartbreak," he shakes his head as he speaks, barely missing the curb as he turns a corner, fingers going white on the steering wheel.

"you love him?" dustin asks, shifting in his seat. time after time begins to play through the speakers and billy hesitates.

"i haven't really ever loved anyone," he admits, stopping at the redlight, momentarily. steve was different than anyone else he'd ever dated before. sure, billy was infatuated by steve, doted on his intimacy and nerves, the small gestures that he adored. he was nothing like any of billy's ex-girlfriends and not just because of his gender. he held billy's hand and traced the imperfections painted on his skin with tender-hearted gentleness, pressed kisses to his jawline like he was about to become non-existent. he did everything others didn't.

"not even your mom?" dustin questioned and billy's brows furrowed.

"my mom- she's not around anymore, kid," and dustin's immediately backtracking with profuse apologies, billy just shakes his head, "it's fine, dustin."

still, the car settles into heavy silence until billy speaks up.

"i guess so," dustin frowns, confused.

"huh?"

"i guess i love him," admitting it out loud made billy feel all kinds of things that weren't himself but he was keen to accept them and dustin nodded once more, smile curving his face up. billy noticed a ginger in the distance who he immediately matched up to maxine.

"listen, kid, if you ever need advice, come to me, yeah?" dustin nodded slowly, doting on the friendship blossoming between them. he begins to clamber out the car but billy quickly stops him.

"you need a ride back after you're done?" he questions and dustin nods, murmurs 'nine thirty', "wanna go out for ice cream later then?" he raises his eyebrows, thinking before a smirk plays on his lips.

"can everyone else come?" he asks and his eyes widen just like harrington's do and god forbid him, because he's accepting gingerly.

"i'll think about it," he leaves the car with a fresh smile, bounding up to his friends and billy waits, watches them walk towards the arcade before he sets off back down the road again with his heart on his sleeve.